

Opening Statement

Of

Wm. Lacy Clay, Chairman

***Information Policy, Census, and National Archives
Subcommittee***

Oversight and Government Reform Committee

***“2010 Census: “Assessing the Bureau’s Strategy for Reducing
the Undercount of Hard-to-Count Populations”***

***Monday, March 23, 2009
2154 Rayburn HOB
10:00 a.m.***

GOOD MORNING AND WELCOME TO TODAY’S OVERSIGHT HEARING ON ASSESSING THE CENSUS BUREAU’S STRATEGY FOR REDUCING THE UNDERCOUNT OF HARD-TO-COUNT POPULATIONS.

THE PURPOSE OF TODAY’S HEARING IS TO EXAMINE THE CENSUS BUREAU’S STRATEGIES FOR TWO ASPECTS OF THE INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN, THE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AND PAID ADVERTISING. WE SEEK ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS:

- 1) HOW WILL THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN DECREASE THE UNDERCOUNT AND INCREASE THE MAIL RESPONSE RATE OF HARD-TO-COUNT COMMUNITIES? AND

- 2) WHETHER THE CAMPAIGN MESSAGING WILL GENERATE COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE CENSUS?

WE WILL ALSO LOOK AT FUNDING FOR THE 2010 CENSUS, INCLUDING THE \$1 BILLION ALLOCATED IN THE STIMULUS BILL.

CENSUS DAY 2010 IS NEARLY ONE YEAR AWAY. YET, AS WE LEARNED IN OUR HEARING ON MARCH 5TH, THERE IS STILL MUCH WORK TO BE DONE BY THE BUREAU TO PUT ITS OPERATIONAL PLANS FOR IN PLACE.

THE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM COULD BE VERY HELPFUL IN ENSURING THAT EVERYONE IS COUNTED. THE PROGRAM IS CREDITED WITH ATTRIBUTING TO THE SUCCESS OF THE 2000 CENSUS. ACCORDING TO A REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, KEY CENSUS-TAKING ACTIVITIES SUCH AS RECRUITING TEMPORARY CENSUS WORKERS AND ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO COMPLETE THEIR QUESTIONNAIRES WOULD HAVE BEEN LESS SUCCESSFUL HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE BUREAU'S AGGRESSIVE PARTNERSHIP EFFORTS.

THE PAID ADVERTISING PROGRAM COULD ALSO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN REDUCING THE UNDERCOUNT, AS IT DID IN 2000. THE BUREAU HAS PLANS TO USE NATIONAL AND LOCAL MEDIA TO GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT THE CENSUS AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION. MEDIA BUYS SHOULD SEEK TO REACH DIVERSE MARKETS IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND COST-EFFICIENT MANNER POSSIBLE. WE WILL FIND OUT TODAY HOW THE BUREAU PLANS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL.

I THANK ALL OF OUR WITNESSES FOR APPEARING TODAY AND LOOK FORWARD TO THEIR TESTIMONIES.